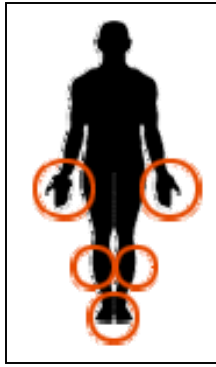


HEAT CRAMPS

Heat cramps are severe muscle spasms resulting from heavy sweating during exertion in extreme heat. The condition is caused by excessive loss of fluids and salts.

Heat cramps are common in people who sweat a lot. Layers of clothing may hide heavy sweating.

Heat cramps are an early signal that the body is having trouble with heat.



SYMPTOMS

- **Often begins** suddenly in hands, calves or feet
- **Pain or muscle spasms** are often disabling
- **Muscles** are hard, tense, difficult to relax

TREATMENT

- **Drink** beverages or eat foods that contain salt
- Persons who have heart problems or are on a low sodium diet should seek medical attention for heat cramps

HEAT EXHAUSTION

Heat exhaustion results from prolonged exposure to heat, resulting in excessive loss of fluids from heavy sweating. This leads to fatigue, low blood pressure and sometimes collapse. Sweating is good, because it helps cool the skin. Excessive sweating can be dangerous, because salts (electrolytes) are lost with the fluids, disturbing the circulation and making it harder for the brain to function.

This results in a form of mild shock

If not treated the person may suffer from heat stroke

SYMPTOMS

- Fatigue, weakness
- Anxiety
- Drenching sweats
- Heartbeat slow, weak
- Skin cold, pale, clammy
- Confusion
- Low blood pressure
- Possible collapse or fainting
- Nausea or vomiting

TREATMENT

- Replace fluids** and salt; drink cool, slightly salty beverages every few minutes
- **Lie flat** or with head lower than rest of body
- **Move** to a cool environment, cool shower, bath or sponge bath
- **After dehydration**, persons often recover fully
- **If blood pressure** remains low and pulse is slow more than an hour after treatment, consult a physician

HEATSTROKE

Heat exhaustion must not be confused with heatstroke.

Heatstroke is a life-threatening condition. It occurs from long, extreme exposure to heat, in which a person can't sweat enough to lower body temperature. The condition results from a combination of high temperature and high humidity.

A victim of heatstroke looks flushed and has hot, dry skin.

Also known as sunstroke, heatstroke develops either suddenly or gradually. The condition requires immediate, intensive treatment.

Sunstroke is a form of heatstroke caused by overexposure to the sun.

SYMPTOMS

- **May or may not** be preceded by warning signs, such as **headache, vertigo, fatigue**
- **Sweating**
- **Skin** is hot, flushed, usually dry
- **Heart rate** increases, more than 100 beats/ minute, (the normal rate is 60 to 100 beats/ minute)
- **Breathing rate** usually increases
- **Throbbing headache**
- **Body temperature** rises rapidly to 104°F to 106°F
- **Disoriented, confused**; may lose consciousness or have convulsions
- **Nausea or vomiting**

TREATMENT

Heatstroke is an emergency. Take the person to a hospital quickly. If the person cannot be taken soon enough, some life-saving measures should be started while waiting for transportation.

- **Wrap victim** in wet bedding or clothing, or cool bath, or cool with ice
- **If outdoors**, place victim in cool, shady place
- **Give victim cold water** with one teaspoon of salt per pint
- **Summon** emergency medical assistance
- **If the person is vomiting** turn them on their side

Identifying and Treating Heat Related Problems

Aging Resource Center of Milwaukee County

414 289 6874 - TTY 289 - 8591

www.milwaukee.gov/county/aging

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